What has the Bible done for woman.

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land. It indicates, next, that woman shall be the poorest of the poor, the most helpless of the needy. It provides, in fact, that all the property shall be owned by the men,—that women shall never inherit property, except when the male heirs are all dead. Hence the widow, while afflicted for the loss of her lord, must suffer the loss of property, and, in consideration of being deprived of the farm, she shall be permitted to glean the scattered ears in the alienated harvest field. Such laws are not sheer insult, unmitigated cruelty to woman; but that is all we can say in their favor. There is sufficient show of kindness in them to make their inhumanity the more visible, and to rouse the just man's indignation to its highest pitch.

But there is a law against the oppression of the widow and the fatherless. Yes, we are aware of it. But what does the law mean by oppression? Was it no oppression to deprive the widow and her fatherless little ones of the family estate, in favor of the privileged male heir, reducing them to beggary, slavery, or starvation? There was a law against oppressing the widow, but, in connection with the other laws of the Bible, it could do no good; and accordingly we find that the widow always *was* oppressed, and that the very ministers of the law did habitually, even to the time of Jesus, devour widows' houses, and, by way of compensation, make long prayers. This was the great privilege of the widow under the Bible law, to be plundered by the priest and the prelate, and be permitted to see the plunderers pull long pharisaical faces and listen to their long damnation prayers.

I find that in the book quoted by the clergyman, every passage in the Bible that can be made to speak a word for woman, is quoted, and made the most of; while other passages, of a different tone, are all passed over in silence. It was natural that an author who believed that the Bible was the word of an all perfect God, should suppose it to be full of tenderness and generosity to woman, and should therefore see in its provisions much more of kindness than was really there, and fail to see the heartlessness, the cruelty, the insults, which really *were* there. The mind that is under the influence of prejudice must of necessity be incapable of judging righteously. In what light do Bible teachings in relation to woman present themselves to minds *free* from prejudice? We answer, as the utterances of ignorant, rude and religious, but selfish and cruel barbarians. And in this sad light we imagine they will pre-

sent themselves to all who can examine them with unperverted minds.

1. The Bible always treats woman as man's inferior. Woman, according to the Bible, was not made for herself, but for man. Man, according to the Bible, was made for himself and his Maker; and if he could have got along comfortably alone, woman would never have been made. But it was found, on trial, that it was not good for man to be alone. Yet even then an attempt was made to meet man's social wants without bringing into existence so dangerous a creature as woman. So God created various kinds of inferior animals and brought them to Adam; but among them all we are told, there was no help meet for man. How wonderful!—There were asses, and hogs, and goats, and sheep, but none of them came up exactly to man's idea of a perfect companion and friend. Perhaps he was afraid the ass might use its heels too freely, or the goat its horns, or that the hog might weary him with its eternal grunt. No matter, he wanted something different from all of them. So God, as a last resort, made woman, and placed her before him, and she seemed exactly the kind of creature he wanted. But in all this, no regard is shown to woman; man is the only one whose interests are consulted. And hence the Apostle says, "Man was not created for woman, but the woman for man." Accordingly woman must be subservient to man's interests or caprices. Man must be lord, woman a slave. Woman must be at man's disposal, and be subject to his will or whim in every thing. He shall say whether she shall be his wife or concubine; she shall have no say in the matter. Man shall say how many he will have, and how long he will keep them; *they* should not be consulted in any thing. The question shall never be, What is best for woman? but, What is agreeable to man? "Man was not made for woman, but woman for man." Blessed Apostle!

This revolting principle runs through the whole Bible. "Thy desire, thy will, shall be subject to thy husband," says the Bible God, "and he shall rule over thee." Hence woman, in the Bible, is bought and sold like property. Thus Jacob buys Rachel and Leah with seven years' service for each. The prophet Hosea seems to get one of his wives for her board, while he gives for another of them fifteen pieces of silver, and a homer and a half of barley. But both were marred ones, such as some people would have been loth to have as gifts. Even in the ten commandments

man is respected, how fearfully, how cruelly she is wronged. The investigations made into the origin and causes of prostitution show, that whatever Solomon may say to the contrary, prostitution is chargeable mainly on man—that here, also, woman is more sinned against than sinning. The degradation is not voluntary on the part of woman, but forced on her by man's injustice, unfaithfulness and cruelty. And religion has shown no tendency to diminish this mournful vice. It tends rather to increase it, as well as to aggravate its evils. It keeps man and woman in ignorance of those natural laws which alone can check indulgence and fit people for wise self-government. Out of two thousand prostitutes, in the city of New York, whose history was ascertained, it was found that nineteen hundred and forty-five were children of believing parents, had been piously brought up, and were themselves Christian believers at the time of the investigation. There were but sixty-five the religious sentiments of whose parents were unknown. And in no case did it appear that the parents of the unfortunates were unbelievers. Those States of the Union in highest repute for puritanical piety—such as Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts—furnished the greatest number of those hapless creatures; while those States most noted for liberal views, furnished the fewest.

Orthodox Christians do nothing for the salvation of those unfortunates. What is done is done by heretics and unbelievers. The clergy *can* do nothing. Their doctrines and ceremonies are powerless, or powerful only for evil. The clergy and their pious orthodox supporters have no desire to lessen the evil, unless they can bring the victims into the church, and make them strictly orthodox, both in faith and manners; and that they cannot do. So they do nothing, except helping to hinder others from doing anything. They will not hear of palliatives. They do not wish offenders to offend less, unless they can be wholly and at once reformed according to the vicious and unnatural standards of the church. Nor do they wish the physical evils of prostitution to be abated; they rather wish them to be aggravated. Their principle is, "If people *will* sin, the *more* they sin the better, and the worse they suffer the better. The extremes of guilt and misery are the only means to bring them to repentance." Hence all that is done or even attempted to abate the evil, is the work of unconverted, unperverted people. The pious orthodox are too pure to attempt half measures, or even to attempt any-

thing by rational means. They oppose, denounce and persecute rational, humanitarian reformers. Nay, so holy are our clergymen and church members, that they would dread the entrance of a reclaimed sister amongst them, though known to be thoroughly reformed. It is not virtue that they want, but respectability. It is not men's welfare that they seek, but their own advantage.

We may know how women are respected by the clergy and the churches, from the treatment which Frances Wright, Ernestine L. Rose, Lucretia Mott, and other intelligent and philanthropic women have received at their hands.—Because they ventured to think for themselves and assert their moral independence, they were insulted, derided, slandered, persecuted, mobbed, and permitted to escape with their lives only because the spirit of humanity among the irreligious would not allow them to put them to death. Virtue is nothing, intelligence is nothing, beauty, talent and eloquence are nothing, noble bearing, refined manners, learning, wealth and rank are nothing; all that can exalt, adorn and dignify woman is nothing, in the eyes of the pious zealot, the Bible fanatic, if she refuse to bow to clerical authority, or pander to clerical selfishness and pride.

Of course the clergy and their pious friends pretend great respect for female devotees. They laud them in their sermons, and flatter them in their social intercourse. Oh! the dear, good creatures! How much is the cause of God and of the blessed Redeemer entitled to their zeal and devotion! They were last at the cross when the Saviour suffered; they were first at the sepulchre when the Saviour rose. They build and adorn our churches, and grace our congregations. They teach in our Sabbath schools at home, and accompany our missionaries to the heathen abroad. They distribute our tracts and collect our funds, and everywhere prove themselves the most untiring, the most vigilant, the most successful aids of the blessed gospel. Oh! nobly do they repay the infinite obligations under which the gospel has laid them. Such are the strains in which woman is lauded by ministers of the gospel. But what are such praises worth? What is their meaning? What is their object? Do they show that woman is really respected and honored by the clergy; that she is the object of that reverence and devotion with which she is regarded by the truly enlightened and truly noble man? Just the contrary. Those clerical commendations

of women are so many insults. They reveal, not reverence or devotion, but fraud and selfishness. They are the commendations which the slaveholder gives his obsequious slaves, or the huntsman his serviceable hounds. So Russian aristocrats commend their serfs. So white Americans commend their colored neighbors when they keep their places. Even know-nothings will tolerate a foreigner if he will hand over to them his property, and work for them without wages. Even savages are willing to have women as drudges, and willing to commend them if they are servile enough. But is *this* doing justice, or giving honor, to woman?

We grant that woman is more respected and better treated than formerly, but it is not because the world is more pious, but because it is more enlightened and skeptical. It is infidelity, humanity, not Christianity that is elevating the character and improving the condition of woman. Our Puritan forefathers were more pious than we, as the clergy know, yet their treatment of woman was cruel in the extreme. In proportion as they exceeded us in piety, they exceeded us in their insolence and inhumanity to woman. It was our very pious forefathers that fined, and banished, and murdered the beautiful, the eloquent and noble Anne Hutchinson and her interesting children. It was our pious Puritan forefathers that imprisoned innocent Quakeresses, stripped them naked to the waist, dragged them at the cart tail, and with horsewhips flogged them on their bare bodies, till their tender flesh hung in shreds, and their innocent blood streamed reeking to the ground. It was our very pious and orthodox Puritan fathers that hanged the noble Quakeresses on Boston Common, and that showed a zeal for God that would have sacrificed every intelligent and high-minded woman on earth if suspected of heresy or unbelief. It was those same pious Puritans that fined a woman for kissing her child on the priest's high day. It is because the piety of our age is diluted with rationalism that woman is treated less insolently and cruelly now; and it is because piety is not entirely supplanted by rational views, that woman does not receive all the respect and enjoy all the happiness to which she is entitled.

It is worthy of remark that those religious sects which have gone farthest in conceding to women their rights, are those which are little more than nominal believers, such as the old fashioned Quakers, and modern Unitarians. Both these denominations are infidels in reality. An infidel is

one who rejects the authority of the Bible—who acknowledges only the authority of reason. And this the Quakers and Unitarians do. The great authority with the Quakers is the light within; what we call reason. And reason is the sole authority of the consistent Unitarian. When men become rationalists both in name and deed, they treat woman as their equal. They do not respect themselves less, but woman more.

And those persons who in different lands protest against the wrongs inflicted on woman, and demand for her a better lot both mentally and morally, are mostly rationalists, or heretics and unbelievers. No other classes *can* consistently demand the needful reforms. The Christian must go against his Bible if he would plead for woman's rights. Hence all who protest against the wrongs inflicted on woman, are denounced as infidels by the clergy. And the clergy, ignorant as they are in other respects, generally know whether a movement is Christian or infidel in its bearings.

And all the improvements in modern legislation with regard to woman, are in opposition to the Bible. The laws which recognize woman's right to divorce, her right to property, her right to complain of a husband's injustice, or of a father's despotism, are all antiscriptural, and are all attributable to the skeptical and philosophical tendencies of the age.

Again, woman cannot be happy without the proper exercise of her unbounded affections. She must love and be beloved. She must marry, and marry a man whom she can love, and from whom she can confidently look for returns of love. But the Bible makes no provision for this reciprocal affection. The Bible knows nothing about love. The writers of the Bible did not understand the subject. They seem not to have known of the existence of that unbounded and self-sacrificing affection, which enlightened and virtuous people of the present day call love. The idea of mutual affection, the reciprocal love of pure and equal minds, as constituting marriage, and as essential to the purity and happiness of domestic life, seems never to have entered their minds. They were selfish and brutal in their affections. Even Paul had no idea of the nature of true marriage, or of the higher forms of conjugal affection. The only object of marriage, in his idea, was the prevention of irregular indulgence; and the only thing which could justify marriage in his judgment was ungovernable brutal

appetite. And the ideas of Jesus seem to have been no higher. Of that strange endearment, that reciprocal enchantment, that mutual adoration, that exalted and rapturous devotion, embodying all the elements of perfect friendship, with something infinitely higher and happier, inspiring worship and imparting bliss exstatic and ineffable, leaving in the soul no void, no lack, no longing, but filling and overflowing the wrapt, confiding souls with pure and infinite delight, they never dreamed. Yet without this perfect, infinite, reciprocal affection, with all its rest and all its raptures, woman lives in vain.

Of course woman can never be satisfied with *divided* affection. The true, the normal woman loves but one, and seeks not to be loved by more than one, but she expects as a matter of course that that one will love her with an undivided heart. Polygamy to her is hateful and horrible as death and hell. She loves home; she values it infinitely; but the dwelling of a polygamist is no home to the true and normal woman; it is a dungeon. To an enlightened, virtuous, noble-minded woman, the Bible stories of polygamal heroes and polygamal harems, are disgusting and revolting beyond measure. To be captured by such a monster and lodged in such a harem, and subjected to its revolting indignities, would be as bad as the fabled tortures of Christian damnation.

Again: Woman wants constancy in her mate, and must have it or be wretched. She changes not herself, and can endure no change in her adorer. And where love is true and its conditions right, no change takes place, except such change as that from the bud to the open blossom, and from the fragrant blossom to the delicious fruit. Divorce is for blind and brutal lovers.

Woman cannot be happy unless her children are happy. Her children's sorrows and her children's joys are her own. She loves her offspring with the same unbounded affection with which she loves her worthy and devoted husband. A mother's love is proverbial; it has been so from the earliest ages of which we have memorials. That a woman should forget her child has been ranked among the things impossible. A woman mourning for the loss of her child is the emblem of the ancients for the last extremes of grief. Even the lower animals show a wild and unbounded affection for their offspring. A bear bereaved of her whelps is inconsolable, her rage is uncontrolable, and wo to the hapless man that meets her in her fury. Even the common

hen, a proverb for pusillanimity on other occasions, is furious when her chicks are threatened, and will assail the most formidable of foes in their defence. There is a horrid tale on record of a man who, when wrecked, took the plank from his own son, willing to save himself by his own child's death. We hope the story is false; but some believe it is true. No such revolting story could be true of woman. She dies for her child.

History abounds with touching stories of a mother's unbounded and undying love. When the Rothsay Castle Steamer was wrecked, a woman was on board with her babe. While the waves were washing over the deck, she took off her shawl and wrapped it round her babe, and carefully bound the little one to her breast. As wave after wave dashed over her, drenching her with its waters, she clung the faster to her hold and the faster to her babe. At last a heavier swell broke over the wreck, and mother and babe were washed into the deep. Still, even when drowning in the troubled waters, she was seen to raise her babe above the billows, and with her last breath heard to cry, My child! my child!

The child is dearer to the mother than she is to herself. No system, therefore, can make woman truly happy—happy as she ought to be—that subjects her children to indignity and sorrow. Yet this the Bible system does. It subjects the child to the priest, and makes him a spiritual slave. It subjects him to the tortures of the theological drill, and stretches his soul on the rack of orthodoxy and piety. It frowns on his childish mirth and pleasures, and threatens his innocent sports with damnation. It hangs the heavens with black, and wraps the earth in gloom, and fills all space with malignant devils, or more malignant Gods. It agitates the youth with unearthly fears, and tortures him with cruel anxieties. It bewilders his understanding, paralyzes his judgment, and entangles him in endless perplexities. It teaches the mother, so the orthodox expounders tell us, that her children are naturally and totally depraved; that they come into the world, as Wesley expresses it, half brute and half devil; that they are objects of God's wrath, and legitimate heirs of hell. It encourages the father to beat them,—to beat them with a rod,—and not to let his soul spare for their crying. It makes gloom and tears and poverty a duty, and enjoins them on pain of damnation. Yet it inculcates, at the same time, joy and confidence and thankfulness, thus demanding contradictions and impossi-

bilities. Hence misery or hypocrisy, nay misery *and* hypocrisy, are made a necessity, and nature is set against nature, and humanity against humanity. Life is made a suicidal war. Faith is set against reason, and reason against conscience, and conscience against right, and right against law, and the mind is racked with infinite antagonisms. A smile, a jest, a humorous word, may damn you, yet murder and the gallows may carry others direct to paradise. No greater calamity can befall a child than to become the subject of an orthodox concern for religion. The perplexities and terrors of the disordered mind are truly maddening. And the grief of the devoted, anxious mother, forced to stand by and witness the sad agony of her distracted child, knows no bound. Even *pious* mothers often find it as much as they can bear to see the sufferings of their children under an orthodox concern for the salvation of their souls. How great and grievous then must be the distress of a sensible, unperverted mother, to see a child thus tortured!

The enlightened mother loves science, and art, and culture, and beauty, and rejoices in the intellectual development, and lofty aspirations of her children. But these the Bible condemns. True, people generally respect them and covet them in the present day; but that is because the Bible is no longer sole dictator. Science is anti-christian. Philosophy is heresy and unbelief. Art and refinement are infidelity. Even health and beauty, and wealth and power, are anti-christian; and life itself is only valued by the consistent saint, as a means of preparation for death.

The clergy tell us that polygamy was universal among the Pagans. This, however, is not true. It was common among the Jews, and it is common still among the Mormons and Mohammedans, who derive their religion from the Bible; but among the Greeks and Romans it was not common. The Roman law forbade polygamy; while in the Bible you have neither law nor counsel against it. Among the ancient Teutons, the fathers of the mightier portion of our modern civilized nations, woman was treated with peculiar respect. "The old Teutonic tribes," says Mrs. Child, "had always been remarkable for the high consideration in which they held their women, and the respect with which they treated them. They habitually consulted them in all the affairs of war and government. The best of the Romans acknowledged that, with regard to the dignity and purity of women, the sickly civilization of

their own country was keenly rebuked by the more healthy tone of their barbarian conquerors. Yet the Romans were far in advance of the Bible worthies. The introduction of this element of respect for woman into the Christian Church at an early period, had a very important and beneficent influence upon Christianity in the Western world." Again, says Mrs. Child, "Teutonic tribes married but one wife, and fully acknowledged the equality of men and women both in matters religious and in matters political. The *Romans* prohibited polygamy by law. How far the Romans had advanced beyond Asiatic [Bible] ideas on the subject, is indicated by a remark of Cato, the Censor, who lived two hundred and thirty-two years before Christ. He was accustomed to say, "They who beat wives or children lay sacrilegious hands on the most sacred things in the world. For myself, I prefer the character of a good husband to that of a great Senator."

Much is said about the tender and delicate regard of Jesus for woman. For myself, I see no signs of it in his history. I see signs of the contrary. According to the Gospels he did not treat even his own mother and sisters with respect. He treated them rudely, heartlessly, cruelly. He called the poor Syrophœnician woman a dog. He allowed one woman, if the horrible story is to be credited, to wash his feet with her tears, and wipe them with the hair of her head. A man that had any delicacy of feeling, would sooner drown himself than allow a woman so to degrade herself. A man that could allow a woman to wash his soiled feet and wipe them with the hair of her head, should be branded as infamous for ever. Even death itself would not be atonement sufficient for such an offence, for such an outrage upon womanly delicacy.

The tendency of the Bible to encourage injustice and cruelty towards woman may be seen in the writings of Wesley. He recommends that the first lesson which young husbands should teach their wives should be, *to know their place as their husbands' inferiors*—to regard their husbands as their lords and masters—to yield obedience to their husbands' commands; and he recommends husbands, if their wives do not obey them promptly, to enforce obedience by suitable correction. No wonder the wife of the Methodist tyrant ran away, choosing rather to starve than to live in such bondage.

The clergy quote the words of Paul, that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female; and tell

us that Christianity makes the sexes equal; whereas nothing can be more false. Christianity does not make men and women equal either in the church, the family, or the State. In the church a woman is not permitted to speak, or even to ask a question. In the family, she is to obey her husband, as the church obeys Christ, in all things. In the State, she is left to the spirit of the age, for Christianity does not demand for her a single right, or ask for her a single favor. And the practice of the church, so far as the skeptical spirit of the age will permit, is in accordance with Christianity. A woman is not allowed either to preach, to exhort, or to pray aloud in the orthodox churches. They may teach in Sabbath schools, carry round theological trash in the shape of tracts, collect for missionary societies, tease husbands, brothers, neighbors and children, into compliance with church demands, raise funds for the minister, get up fine parties for him, pamper and caress him, and applaud his sermons, and damn his enemies, and do any other kind of ecclesiastical drudgery; but they must never think of equality with male members of the church, on pain of dishonor and excommunication. Still less must they study science, or make themselves familiar with liberal books, or question the authority of the priesthood, or modify their creed. And if, through the force of truth, they should become unbelievers, they are given up at once to shame and inevitable damnation. It is bad enough for a *man* to be an unbeliever, but for a *woman* to disbelieve, is the sin that is not only unpardonable, but utterly inexcusable. In short, woman may be a *slave* in the church, and if she is a *willing* slave, working continually for the aggrandizement of the church and clergy, she shall be praised and flattered; but if she aspire to anything better than slavery, she is hated, shunned and damned.

The Bible abounds with obscenities—obscenities, many of them, peculiarly offensive to pure-minded and high-minded women. We cannot give the passages, decency forbids; but in no book have I met with stories, descriptions and allusions, calculated more rudely and painfully to shock a modest and cultivated woman, than some in the Books of Moses, the Song of Solomon, and some of the prophets. It is melancholy to think that the delicate hands of woman should be employed in circulating a book containing such obscenities. This terrible fact is itself a proof how much the Bible and the clergy can do for the corruption and degradation of woman.

Woman is secure—first, in proportion to her intellectual development; and, second, in proportion to her independence. When woman is ignorant, dependent, poor, she readily becomes the victim of the base, the rich, the powerful. The Bible favors both ignorance and poverty, credulity and servility, and thus renders the ruin of millions inevitable. Infidelity favors the intellectual cultivation, and the physical independence of woman, and thus helps to promote her virtue and happiness.

The Bible gives no sufficient rules for the conduct of men and women in the marriage state. There are a hundred matters of importance to the happiness of husbands and wives, parents and children, not once touched either by the Old Testament or the New. There are a hundred duties, not one of which is enjoined. There are a hundred errors, against not one of which the husband or the father, the wife or the mother, is warned. Hence numberless marriages are unhappy. Hence hopes, bright as the morning, give place to gloom and despondency, dark as night, Hence millions that should have passed their days in joyousness, languish in misery, or die in their prime. And millions of children are born with worthless constitutions, with bodies and minds unfitted for the duties and pleasures of life. And because the Bible is regarded as a perfect rule of duty, the evil is looked upon as incurable, and generation after generation grope their way through the murkiness and misery of vice, to untimely and unhonored graves. Nay, public sentiment is so corrupted and perverted through belief in the perfection of the Bible, that those who see the evil and perceive the remedy, are deterred from interfering by the dread of public reprobation.

And all this while the clergy, blind leaders of the blind, rave about the blessed influences of the Bible, and about woman's obligations to its teachings. Thus men put darkness for light, and light for darkness; call evil good, and good evil. But shall it be so for ever? Will day never dawn on the night of the soul? It dawns already. The night is past; the morning breaks; and the sun of truth already appears on the dim horizon. The condition of our race is not hopeless. The bigot and the brute, the fanatic and the fury are not to rule mankind for ever. Truth is asserting her rights, and virtue is rising to dominion; and man and woman, after many ages of darkness, and gloom, and sorrow, shall be enlightened, happy and free.

JONAH AND THE WHALE.

The story of Jonah and the Whale is full of improbabilities from beginning to end.

1. Naturalists tell us that whales are not in the habit of swallowing men. They do not live on men. There is no instance on record of a man, or anything like a man, being found in the stomach of a whale. Numbers have been killed. And numbers of men have been exposed to whales; yet there is no record of any one having been seized and swallowed by a whale.

2. Nay, naturalists go so far as to assure us that the whale *cannot* swallow a man,—that the throat of a whale is not wide enough for such a purpose. The whale has neither the disposition nor the power to *take him in* so far.

But God *prepared* a whale, it is said, *made* one specially for the occasion. But a whale would not answer the purpose. It would have to be some other fish to be able to swallow a man. Besides, it would have been as easy to have saved Jonah *without* a whale, as to have made a whale, or even to have brought one already made to the spot.

3. While a whale *could not* have swallowed, no other big fish would have been *willing* to swallow him, without unfitting the prophet for any useful purpose afterward. The shark would have used his teeth more than would have been convenient or agreeable,—would have interfered so much with his shape, that his friends would hardly have known him when he made his appearance again. In fact, fish generally are very selfish animals, and expect to make something out of those whom they accommodate with lodgings in their unfurnished rooms. They are accustomed to pay themselves for the trouble of catching their customers. They don't work for nothing. It is doubtful whether a shark would be willing to serve even God for nought. And so with regard to all other big fish. They are as selfish as ministers of the Gospel.

4. Jonah would hardly have had satisfactory accommodations in the stomach of a fish, if he had got safely down. He would hardly have room enough. He would certainly have none for exercise. And he would certainly find it very disagreeable to have to remain so long in one position. It would be bad enough to have to pass two or three days in

a railway car, without the privilege of changing your position; but what must it have been to be crumpled up and pressed all round inside a fish? A thoughtful parent would hardly keep a favorite child in such a condition as that three days and three nights.

5. Besides, it seems to me that the stomach of a whale would be rather a damp room for the prophet to lodge in so long. And Jonah would be dripping wet when he went in. And he would certainly find no convenience inside for drying his clothes, nor even for drying himself; he, ten to one, had no towels when thrown overboard, and, if he had, they could not have been of much use. And three days and three nights would be a long time for a man to lie soaking and sodden in the stomach of a fish. He must have been a slimy, slippery mass when he came out. I should think he would hardly know himself. Certainly no one else would know him.

6. The room would be rather filthy too as well as damp. I suppose the fish would go on eating, and that Jonah would have to lie and wallow in the digested and half digested mass which the fish would lay in for its own accommodation. And if the process of digestion went on as usual, Jonah himself would run some danger of being digested. In any case the prophet himself would be in a pitiful case, cased up in the case of the fish, and in no case allowed to go out for three whole days and nights.

7. His clothes too would be in a pitiful case. One good thing, they would be likely to stick to him; but, whether it would be worth his while to stick to them might be a question. I'm thinking the prophet would cut a sorry figure when he reappeared in daylight. Would he not be in a fine condition to visit the great city. Just fancy him making his appearance as he came out of the fish. And nothing is said about God providing his servant with a new suit of clothes.

8. But, again; three days and three nights would be too long for a man to do without food, especially for a man just escaped from such a violent storm. He had doubtless been very sea sick, and gone into his new quarters with an empty stomach. And it would be bad fasting so long in such a case. Fasting comes best after a good meal. Jonah had no doubt plenty of food for *reflection*, but that might not be the best kind of food for a hungry man.

9. Jonah would also want something to drink. Trouble is a terrible thing for making people dry. Yet there would

be nothing but salt water at hand, and he would be unable to get even that.

10. He would also want air. A man can live longer without food and drink, than without fresh air. In fact, a man cannot live ten minutes without a supply of fresh air. Yet no such supply could be had in the stomach of a fish.

11. It is hard to say how the *fish* would fare with such an indigestible load on its stomach. Such a mass would cause inflammation in some animals.

12. The *vomiting* of Jonah is not without its difficulties. It is not always so easy for so great a fish to get close to the shore. And it would be no common force that would be requisite to *throw* Jonah on shore.

13. There are other improbabilities about the story. Jonah's *song* does not agree with the story. He says, in his song, that *God* had cast him into the deep, whereas the story says the *sailors* did it. He also says, the waters compassed him about. The depths closed him round about; the weeds were wrapped about his head. This is the description of a man in the bottom of the sea, not in a whale's belly. Whales do not eat sea weeds.

14. Then Jonah complains that he was cast out of God's sight. How could that be? The Psalmist teaches that men cannot get out of God's sight: "The darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the night are both alike to thee."—*Psalm* cxxxix.

15. Then there are *moral* difficulties about the story, as well as *physical* ones.

1. Is it probable that Nineveh would be so *unusually* wicked as to require miraculous interference? Why should it be worse than other great cities of the time? And if it was *not*, why not send prophets to all?

2. Why should God neglect the city, till it became so dreadfully corrupt? If he disliked wickedness, why not prevent it? If he could so easily *cure* a city's corruption, how easily he might have prevented it. And how much *better* to prevent than to cure.

3. Was there no one in Nineveh—no native—that could have been employed to admonish the people?

4. Were the Jews so much *better* than other nations that they alone were fit to be teachers of virtue? Were they not, according to their own histories, more wicked than the rest of the nations?

5. Was Jonah really so wise and good as to be fitted for such a high and honorable mission? What kind of a man

was he, according to this story? 1. As soon as God speaks, he disobeys. This was wilful wickedness.

2. He thinks to flee from the presence of the Lord. This was consummate ignorance.

3. When the storm—the judgment—came, he kept fast asleep. He must have been a most hardened reckless wretch, according to his own account. All the rest were praying, while he, the cause of all the trouble, lay fast asleep. True, he tells us, v. 9, that he feared the Lord, but it is no uncommon thing for piety to be linked with depravity. Jonah, according to the story, caused the poor mariners a world of anxiety and trouble. He also caused them the loss of their cargo. Yet he shows no pity for them. But why should he? He was an orthodox Jew; they were but Pagans. He even allowed them to cast lots to find out the guilty cause of the storm, instead of making an honest confession. I suppose he would have allowed one of the innocent mariners to be thrown overboard and drowned if the lot had happened to fall on one of them. The men rowed hard to save Jonah, even after they had found he was the guilty one. Dear good souls; what a contrast between good Pagan humanity and the Jewish prophet's villany.

4. The men, it is said, were exceedingly afraid when they heard of God. But why should *they* be afraid when Jonah was not? If they *were* so soon afraid, how much more susceptible of good they were than he? How much fitter for prophets? Besides, what had they done to make them fear? In short, all looks like a silly attempt to magnify the Hebrews and their God, at the expense of the poor benighted Pagans. And the writer had not sense enough, after all, to make out a plausible case.

5. And what shall we say about the wickedness of Nineveh coming up before God? Is not *every* thing *always* before him?

6. But what *was* this wickedness, to render such an extraordinary mission necessary? The story gives no answer. All is left in the dark. What likelihood is there that one man, a stranger, should arouse, alarm, all the people of so great a city? The idea is absurd! Jesus preached *three years* to the people of Jerusalem, and worked many miracles, it is said, without bringing them to repentance. And shall we believe that this ignorant, heartless, unaccredited stranger, all filthy and sodden from the sto-

mach of the fish, should instantly convert a city fifty times its size?

How would such a prophet, so conditioned, be likely to fare now in Philadelphia or New York—in London, Rome, or Paris? Just imagine some wild Indian, or some tame Chinaman, coming all besmeared, from the belly of a fish, to tell those cities that in forty days they would be overthrown; who would regard the mad cry? They would seize the modern maniac with a pair of tongs, and take him to prison or to an asylum; and tumble him into a bath.

7. In what language did Jonah preach? Did he understand the language of Nineveh? Or did he preach in Hebrew?

8. No matter; Jonah preached, and the effect was terrible. The King ordered a fast. He published a decree that neither man nor beast, nor herd, nor flock, should have either food or water, but that both man and beast should cry mightily to God. The idea of the beasts crying to God, is something new. However, keeping them without food and water would be a very likely method to make them cry either to God or to somebody else, and to cry mightily. This is the first protracted meeting we read of in which beasts and cattle of various kinds engaged in prayer; but not the last, if all we have read of modern protracted meetings be true. And the beasts, and herds, and flocks, were to be covered with sackcloth too! This beats all. And yet, since the days of Baalam, it has been customary, according to sacred and ecclesiastical history, for asses and mules both to preach and put on good woolen clothing. And many of them wear *black* cloth, if not sackcloth, to this day.

9. It is also worthy of remark that Jonah's prophecy did not prove true. Yet it was unconditional. And Jonah *expected* it to be fulfilled. He understood it himself literally, according to the story, and was vexed it was not so fulfilled. He was angry with God, and said he did well,—had a right,—to be angry. And I think he had. God deceived him, if the account be correct. Yet Jonah says he expected as much, and says that this was the reason why he refused to come to Nineveh at first, and fled to Tarshish. Then why should he be so grievously disappointed? And why did he conceal his doubts as to the veracity of God and the truth of his prophecy from the Ninevites. Everything in the story is full of mystery. God deceived Jonah, and Jonah deceived the Ninevites;

then God and Jonah are no sooner together alone than they are contending with each other.

10. Then look at the heartlessness of this prophet. He is vexed, to madness, that the people are saved, though saved on their repentance, and through his preaching too. What did the fury want? Plunder? Gold and silver? Was *this* the man to be sent to *rebuke others?*

11. Then see what pains God takes to put Jonah right. He creates a gourd, and a worm, and sends a miraculous wind, all to convince the prophet that he ought not to get so much out of temper. But nothing seems to have any effect on the surly prophet. God has a hundred times more trouble with his prophet than with all the inhabitants of Nineveh, the cattle and herds included. *Them* he *could* manage; but nothing seemed to have any good effect on Jonah.

On the whole, this story is one of the most absurd and monstrous fables to be found on earth. Yet such is the ignorance of Christians, so terribly are their minds perverted by a religious education, that with them it passes for a divine revelation. Yet even these Christians would reject such a story, if told them on any other authority than the Bible. There was some such story published in the newspapers some time ago. A carpenter on board a ship, fell sick and died at sea, and was put into a sack with a grindstone and buried in the water. His son, who was on board, was so distressed for the loss of his father, that he threw himself overboard and was drowned. Some days after, while the ship was becalmed, the crew were fishing, when they caught a big old shark, and hauled him on deck. When they proceeded to open the monster, they heard a singular noise inside the fish, and, on reaching his interior, they found the carpenter and his son busy at the grindstone. The shark had swallowed them both, and the father, on his son reaching him, had come to life; and the two, not liking their accommodations, had rigged up the grindstone, and set to work to sharpen their knives, to cut their way out. This is even a more miraculous story than that of Jonah and the whale; yet Christians don't believe it, because it is not in the Bible. If the Bible had told it, it would have been glorious.

Some, however, are beginning to doubt the truth of the Old Testament, and to limit their faith to the New. Thus the Rev. Samuel Aaron, when he agreed to debate with me, refused to defend the Old Testament, he would answer

for the New alone. But this was foolish. The New is inseparable from the Old. It makes itself answerable for the Old. It makes itself answerable for this story of Jonah and the whale. Jesus speaks of it as true, saying, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the bowels of the earth." But, strange to say, the son of man, according to the Gospel, was *not* three days and three nights, but only *one* day and *two* nights in the bowels of the earth. For he was buried on Friday evening, and was up by daylight on Sunday morning. The whole Bible abounds with falsehoods and follies, with contradictions and absurdities.

But enough. Perhaps we ought to apologise for spending so much time in exposing these childish fictions. And yet the credulity of the multitude seems to render it necessary. Perhaps, too, we ought to apologise for the *manner* in which we have spoken. And yet, as Buckle observes, argument alone is not sufficient to cure some forms of credulity; a tincture of ridicule is necessary. We have no desire, however, to give believers unnecessary pain. If we could cure their folly, without wounding their feelings, we would gladly do it, but it seems impossible. We have no ill feeling towards Christians; why should we? We were Christians ourselves in our earlier days. Nor do we blame them for believing these impossible stories, for we once believed them ourselves. Their credulity is not their fault, but their misfortune; and the only question should be, how best it can be cured. We have done our best for its cure, and we hope the results will be satisfactory.

Meanwhile, let us all devote ourselves to the study of nature, to the acquisition of science, to the cultivation of virtue, and to the improvement and happiness of our race. Men are ignorant; let us give them instruction. Some are vicious; let us seek their reformation. Many are suffering; let us alleviate their sorrows. Let us especially endeavor to be examples of that intellectual and moral excellence which we wish to behold in others. And while we speak of patriotism and philanthropy, of our duty to our country and to our race, let us not forget the duties we owe to our families. Let us cherish our home affections. Let us train our children wisely, and fit them for an honorable, a happy and a useful life. Let us, by all the gentleness and tenderness of love, and by all the attentions that affection can devise, endeavor to make cheerful and joyous the hearts of

our wives. Let us consecrate our homes to purity and bliss, and worship in those temples, the lawful idols of our souls, our living household gods. Here let us present our costliest offerings. Here let us sing our sweetest songs. Here let music delight with her choicest strains, and enrapture with her divinest melodies. Hither let science and art and literature bring their treasures, and innocent mirth her smiles and jollity. Let all that earth can give, let all that life can enjoy, be lavished on loving, trusting and self-sacrificing woman, and on her children.

"Woman may err—Woman may give her mind
To evil thoughts, and lose her pure estate;
But for *one* woman who affronts her kind
By wicked passions and remorseless hate,
A thousand make amends in age and youth,
By heavenly Pity, by sweet Sympathy,
By patient Kindness, by enduring Truth,
By Love, supremest in adversity.
Theirs is the task to succor the distressed,
To feed the hungry, to console the sad,
To pour the balm upon the wounded breast,
And find dear Pity, even for the bad.
Blessings on Women! In the darkest day
Their love shines brightest; in the perilous hour
Their weak hands glow with strength our feuds to stay.
Blessings upon them!"

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